



San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

NEWS RELEASE

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IN RESPONSE TO NEW STATE EMERGENCY REGULATIONS, CITY ATTORNEY MOVES FORWARD WITH DRAFTING STRONGER FIRE PREVENTION ORDINANCES IN CITY'S "HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES"

*New State Standards will apply to all building permit applications for new construction
submitted on or after July 1, 2008.*

San Diego, CA—By July 1, 2008, the City of San Diego must comply with new state construction regulations to make homes more fire resistant in severe fire hazard areas. In response to the state's emergency regulations, City Attorney Michael Aguirre is drafting new fire prevention ordinances for immediate consideration by the City Council.

The San Diego Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL Fire) are in the process of determining the precise location of the high fire hazard severity zones on fire hazard severity zone maps. Once the hazard severity zone maps are adopted by the City Council, new construction will be subject to the new building code requirements which include roofing construction, attic ventilation, and eave protection. The new building codes are contained in Chapter 7A of the California Building Code.

While the City is required under California law to meet or exceed the state requirements for new construction in "high fire hazard severity zones," the City Attorney, after meeting yesterday with fire prevention experts and representatives from the University of Berkeley's Center for Fire Research and Outreach, determined that further fire prevention measures are also needed for existing development.

"The City Attorney's Office is also researching incentives that can be offered to homeowners who live in fire hazard severity areas," said City Attorney Aguirre. "I believe homeowners will rally around these new fire preventions measures which are designed to protect homes during wild fires."

The state law allows the City to adopt stricter fire prevention measures than required by the California Building Code. The City Attorney is recommending the City use Rancho Santa Fe as a model for new and existing construction and development standards in high fire hazard risk areas, and is a proponent of incentive based and grant funded programs to assist owners of existing development in the high fire hazard zone areas to comply.

(MORE)

“Homes in Rancho Santa Fe were virtually untouched by the recent wildfires due to building and landscape standards designed to create “shelter-in-place” protections,” said Aguirre.

To view the draft of the San Diego Fire Department and CAL Fire “Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps” visit www.sandiegocityattorney.org, click 2007 WildFires, or go to http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fhsz_maps/fhsz_maps_sandiego.php

In addition, San Diegans can enter their addresses and find out if their residence is within the “Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map” by visiting the University of Berkeley’s Center for Fire Research and Outreach website, www.firecenter.berkeley.edu.

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